

I oppose media concentration!

Dear honorable F.C.C. Commission, Pennsylvania Senators and President Bush,

I am writing to you today as a citizen concerned about the state of media in our country. As a young person seeking a career in either the Foreign Service or the field of "International Development" for lack of a better designated term, I am deeply affected by the lack of in depth analysis and "intellectual" coverage of international affairs in the primary media outlets such as TV networks and major daily newspapers. At a time when our world is increasingly interlinked through technology, the news media's coverage is increasingly superficial by choosing to cover stories with the least importance over the long run.

I live temporarily in the nation's fifth market, Philadelphia, and do not lack in stations. Nevertheless, last night each local news station chose to cover the weather and the closing of Veteran's Stadium, albeit important LOCAL news, in the first five minutes. This comes at a time when the only countries Americans are vaguely informed about are Iraq, Venezuela, North Korea, France and Russia if even that. Networks neglect entirely the current civil war raging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and recent past conflicts in the Ivory Coast, Haiti, Zimbabwe and scant attention to the problem of violence in Latin America, notably Colombia. I can only cynically assume that civil war in Africa, murderous repression in Latin America have become so hackneyed as to not even deserve attention in American's homes. While there may indeed be more sources of media than ever before, clearly the spectrum of views presented has been severely limited. Even local news rarely attempts to analyze the causes or solutions to decades' old socio-economic problems of inner-city Philadelphia, where I work daily. Rather, reporters are first on the scene to cover a shooting or drug bust, particularly in poor minority neighborhoods. I am Caucasian, but I can now better understand the common complaints of the unbalanced coverage that minorities decry. I FEEL THE DEREGULATION OF THE MEDIA WILL ONLY EXACERBATE THE PROBLEMS IN COVERAGE OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES.

As an American of direct French descent, my parents immigrated here; I recognize the importance of understanding another point of view, whether it is American, African, European, Asian or Latin American. As a digression, I must share that I have never felt so torn between my two countries as when Franco-American relations deteriorate. Recent under analyzed and oversimplified coverage exclusively on the French opposition to war, despite near 85 percent opposition worldwide, by sources pandering to "uneducated" Americans such as FOX and USA Today, only showed we are not far removed from the German, Japanese and Russian bashing that extolled innumerable suffering on Americans of those heritages from WWI through the Cold War! Because I recognize how crucial it is to be informed of global issues, I read newspapers and magazines in English, French and Spanish from the U.S.A., Europe and Africa! Sadly, the deregulation of the FCC will only lessen Americans' access to media covering issues that will define our era in history such as AIDS in the 3rd World, peace in the Middle East, Education and Health Care at home, Euro-American relations and THE REAL ROOT CAUSES OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: ABJECT POVERTY THAT BREEDS FANATICISM !

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate, or even attempt to demonstrate, the negative effects that media deregulation and consolidation have had on the diversity of our

media. Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules is in place to promote competition, diversity and local voice in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should work to retake all of the past media ownership rules that were amended today. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of the huge, dominant companies and players in the broadcast industry.

The right to conduct an informed debate and discussion of current events, without accusations of treason or harboring "unpatriotic" views, is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was renewed in the marketplace of diverse ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge and consolidate further, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

Please feel free to respond to my lengthy letter at my email address, which is ajmercerson@yahoo.com

Or please write to my addresses:
(Current)